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2315 Alladin Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78228

February 23, 2004

Surface Transportation Board  
Case Control Unit  
1925 K Street, NW  
Washington, D. C. 20423-0001

Received  
2/23/04

Attention: Rini Ghosh

Subject: Finance Docket Number 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

In response to the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, I am submitting the following to be considered in the formal scoping process.

I believe Vulcan's proposed quarry and proposed SGR rail line, regardless of where the railroad is constructed, are connected actions, and should be studied in the same Environmental Impact Statement. The study should include direct impacts and alternatives to both projects, including no quarry and no rail line at all.

I recently purchased a home on a fifty-one acre tract in the Medina Oaks Subdivision in Medina County Texas. My intention was to spend my retirement years in the quiet countryside and clean fresh country air. I did not know at the time of the purchase that plans were in place to develop a quarry with a railroad to support operations within only a few miles of my new home. The northernmost extent of the proposed quarry is less than 500 feet from my southern property line. Had I known about the quarry, I would not have bought the property at any price!

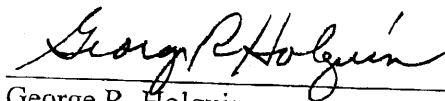
My concerns are as follows:

1. Dust pollution. Dust particles from mining and transporting operations will foul the air and cover everything in the environment, adversely affecting the health and the natural beauty of wildlife and habitat. The dust will adversely affect the health of human residents and the operation of machinery of all kinds. The efficiency and lifetimes of automobiles, air conditioners, power saws, generators and other machinery with moving parts (all machinery) will be reduced. The health of pets and farm animals will not benefit from the dust. Even goats may choke on dust covered forage. Thirty mile vistas will be reduced by dust hanging in the air.

2. Noise pollution. The proposed fifty year twenty-four hour quarry operation will create an incessant barrage of clamorous nerve grating noise which will not end in my lifetime. The noise will drive wildlife from the region; thus reducing their effective habitat. Wildlife species of the region include deer, hog, coyote, fox, wildcat, opossum, raccoon, armadillo, squirrel, road runner, turkey, hawk, snakes, lizards, and many other species. In addition, livestock animals are sensitive to noise and will be more difficult to raise and market.
3. Water pollution: Our only source of water in the subdivision is well water from the Edwards Aquifer. Each household must have its own individual septic system to dispose of waste water. Livestock use water from open tanks. All three systems may be compromised by the proposed operations. If blasting weakens a septic system, nearby wells will be contaminated. If blasting fractures the impervious formations we may lose our well water. Loss of well water ends all farming and livestock operations on arid hill country ranches.

How will residents affected by the proposed quarry operations be protected or compensated for loss of health, quality of life, and livelihood? I believe the Environmental Impact Statement should address these issues and assess the costs to residents. Measures should be put in place to prevent such losses. A fund should be set aside for settling claims of loss due to quarry operations. A procedure should be put in place specifically for adjudicating claims of loss due to quarry operations.

Sincerely,

  
George R. Holguin

cc: U.S. Congressman Henry Bonilla

U.S. Senator John Cornyn

Texas Senator Frank Madla

Texas Representative Timoteo Garza

Medina County Judge Jim Barden

Medina County Commissioner Royce Hartman